Commission on Faculty Affairs  
Minutes  
September 2, 2005

Members attending: Mara Baker, Carlyle Brewster, Ken Eriksson, Pat Hyer (for Mark McNamee), Mike Kelly, Kerry Redican, Diane Zahm, Valerie Hardcastle

Redican called the meeting to order with five items on the agenda: 1) Welcome and Charge of CFA, 2) Board of Visitors Faculty Affairs Issues, 3) Policy Issues, 4) Future Briefings, 5) Other Issues of Concern. A motion was made and passed to adopt the agenda.

Welcome and Charge of CFA
Redican welcomed CFA members and introductions were made. The purpose and charge of the CFA was reviewed.

Board of Visitors Faculty Affairs Issues
Hyer explained the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Visitors (BOV) chose to focus on three areas (Graduate Education, Diversity, and Faculty Affairs) during their 2004 session. The progress report on identified faculty affairs issues that the Academic Affairs Committee received during the August 29, 2005 BOV meeting was shared with CFA members. The progress report summarizes recent actions that have sought to resolve faculty affairs issues associated with faculty compensation, retention and employee relations, worklife policies, and balancing the teaching and outreach missions with the research agenda.

CFA members suggested sending the progress report to the Faculty Senate and allowing them to add to the list if they felt there were additional items that needed attention.

Policy Issues
CFA members were provided with copies of the Stopping the Tenure Clock (2.8.2.1) policy as it is currently written in the Faculty Handbook. Hyer explained the policy is being reviewed by the AdvanceVT Policy Workgroup. Despite recent actions that have been taken to publicize and educate the administration and faculty about the policy, it continues to be enacted differently across departments. Misinformation and misaligned perceptions surrounding the policy result in faculty anxiety about possible negative consequences during the promotion and tenure process and confusion over legitimate reasons to stop the clock among faculty. The AdvanceVT Work Group has proposed changing the policy so that it is easier to use. Using other institutions as a model, the group is proposing that the policy be written so that childbirth or adoption would entitle both male and female faculty to an automatic one-year extension of the tenure clock. Each subsequent birth or adoption would entitle faculty members to one additional extension. Faculty who have multiple births would be entitled to two years.

After discussion, CFA members agreed the policy would better serve faculty if it was re-written so that childbirth resulted in an automatic extension of the tenure clock. Faculty
could elect not to stop the tenure clock but having the policy in place would encourage more faculty to use the policy and lower anxiety. CFA members advised that revisions to the policy should be accompanied by education of department heads and that the policy should explicitly state that males and females are eligible. Hyer will re-write the policy and present it to CFA members for review.

Revisions to the policy governing Research Assignments was also examined by CFA members. Hyer explained that a workgroup of the Faculty Senate had reviewed the policy and advised dropping the quota that currently limits the number of research assignments granted in one year to 5% of the tenured faculty. The quota has never resulted in an application for a research assignment being turned down at the university level, however, having the quota in place may dissuade faculty from applying. CFA members reviewed the revised policy that would be included in the Faculty Handbook (Research Assignment, Section 2.15.3). A motion was made and passed to vote on the revised policy. The revised policy was unanimously approved.

Future Briefings
The list of topics to be considered for upcoming CFA agendas was reviewed. CFA members agreed two issues should be addressed first: part-time tenure track or tenured appointments and non-tenure track options, such as “professors of practice.”

Amelink will obtain recent reports on part-time tenured and tenure-track appointments from U. of Washington and U. of Michigan to distribute to CFA members. Kelly will present the idea to the deans to get a sense of the support for these types of appointments and will report back to the CFA. Harcastle will inquire whether Duke has policies that address non-tenure track appointments similar to the professors of practice and how they are used.

Other Issues of Concern
Hardcastle agreed to serve as the CFA representative on the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity. A representative is still needed for the Health and Benefits Committee.

Recorder: C. Amelink, Office of the Provost